

ARCHEOLOGISTS UNCOVER STRATA

Students will use an idealized profile (drawing of strata) to interpret archeological levels. They will use the law of superposition to assign relative age to the strata.

Objectives (TEKS): 4.6 & 7.8 Skills. The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data. **4.22 & 7.21 Skills** The student applies critical thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources. **HS US History,** The student will use problem solving and decision making processes. **HS World History** The student will identify ways archeologists analyze limited evidence; analyze and organize information; interpret and use multiple sources of evidence.

Materials: Teacher made stratigraphic profile as below for students to see (drawing on board or overhead transparency).

Background: Soil naturally accumulates in layers (**strata**). Each strata may be distinguished by color and texture. Materials of human origin (**artifacts**) are also deposited onto the earth's surface. Materials deposited first are the oldest and are found at the lower level. Most recently deposited materials are the youngest and are on top. This concept is known as the **Law of Superposition**. The Fort St. Louis site in **Victoria County** is a multi-strata site where layers have accumulated over centuries to tell the story of the people who lived there. The site is located on a high bluff overlooking Garcitas Creek. Archeological evidence suggests that for over a thousand years prehistoric Native American people lived on the bluff. From **1685-1688**, a French settlement founded by La Salle, **Fort St. Louis** was there. The Spanish established **Presidio La Bahia** and lived on the same bluff and occupied the site from 1721 to 1725. During the 1800s and 1900s the site was part of a large cattle ranch.

Student activity: Using the Fort St. Louis stratigraphy, draw a layer near the bottom of the board. Develop the profile beginning with the lower level and ending with the modern ground level (including grass). Tell how artifacts are deposited as people live on a surface of the earth without naming the people. The **bottom strata** would be Native American. Then a **new layer** of sediments and artifacts (French) is deposited. Next the Spanish, then Early settlers. Grass for current surface. This happens numerous times as people live on a site. Students will then view the profile of strata from the Fort St. Louis site.

Student product: Students will answer the following questions. Looking at the soil profile of the Fort St. Louis site that you have created: Who left the artifacts **in Level 1? in Level 2? in Level 3? in Level 4?** Which people came to the site first? Which people came to the site last? Help the students recognize the artifacts in the layers (levels). (1) aluminum can, shot gun shell, square nail; (2) majolica pottery, ficas, scissors handle; (3) green olive jar, gun flint, franc, iron fragment; (4) scraper, arrowhead, pottery sherd.

Closure: Summarize how archeologists use stratigraphy to determine who lived on a site and when a site was occupied.

Assessment/evaluation: Predict what future generations will find in the strata for 2000 to 2005.

STRATIGRAPHY FOR SITE ON GARCITAS CREEK, VICTORIA COUNTY

	WHAT PEOPLE LEFT THE ARTIFACTS?
Grass, weeds	
Level 1 aluminum can, gun shell, square nail	
Level 2 majolica pottery, ficas, scissors handle	
Level 3 green olive jar, gun flint, franc, iron fragment	
Level 4 scraper, arrowhead, pottery sherd	